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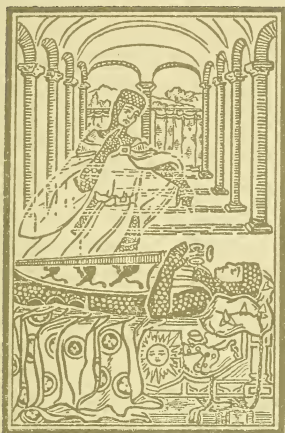




**THE DEBATE OF THE
BODY AND THE SOUL**

THE DEBATE OF THE BODY AND THE SOUL

MODERNIZED BY
FRANCIS JAMES CHILD



INTRODUCTION BY
GEORGE LYMAN KITTREDGE

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INTRODUCTION

THE conception underlying the Debate of the Body and the Soul is very old. Two interesting passages in Plutarch show the idea in a rather definite form, and justify us in supposing that the comparative advantages or disadvantages accruing to Soul and Body from their association in this life was a well-known theme in the discussions of the ancient schools. Along with other bits of antique lore, this general conception passed into the confused stock of moral, psychological, and religious beliefs that mingled with Biblical doctrines in the minds of the early Christians, and thus, reinforced or modified by divers traits from the Orient, it became a part of the mediæval consciousness. Among the documents which influenced the growth of the legend, an obscure, but significant, rôle was played by the apocryphal Vision of St. Paul, assigned to about 380 A. D., and by an uncanny tale sometimes associated with St. Macarius of Alexandria, a holy man of the fourth century.

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Much of this legendary material was known in England before the Norman Conquest, as is shown by certain Anglo-Saxon homilies. There is also a Middle Irish sermon which stands in some kind of relation to the subject, though marked by characteristic traits of Celtic extravagance. These texts afford us some idea of the material on which is based the earliest work that we need to consider specifically, — an Anglo-Saxon poem of the tenth century. They are not the source of the poem, but they enable us to infer, with sufficient certainty, what was the character of that source.

The Anglo-Saxon poem is not a dialogue. It describes the Soul of a wicked man as revisiting the Body, which has been long dead, and upbraiding it bitterly. “My home was within thee, and I was ever harassed by thy wicked lusts, so that I was eager for thy death. Thou didst not stint thyself of meat and drink, but didst let me hunger and thirst for our Lord’s body and the wine of the sacrament. Now is thy glory departed ; thy riches profit thee nothing. Thou art no dearer to thy father or thy mother or any of thy kin than the black raven is. Thou

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art dumb and deaf. Yet I must visit thee by night and leave thee again at cockcrow,) when holy men sing songs of praise to the living God. It were better for thee if thou hadst been born a bird, or a fish in the sea, or a beast of the field. What wilt thou say to our Lord at the Day of Doom? Then must thou and I together appear at the bar of the Almighty, to suffer the torments which thou hast brought upon us by thy evil deeds." The Body lies quiet in the grave; it can make no answer to the accusations of the Soul. A second part, containing the address of a righteous man's Soul to his Body, is unfortunately incomplete. Certain fragments of English verse, dating from the twelfth century, belong to the same group as the Anglo-Saxon poem, but are not derived from it. The reproaches addressed by the Soul to the Body are of the same character, and the Body, as in the Anglo-Saxon, seems incapable of a reply.

In a French poem of the early twelfth century, however, the Body breaks its silence. This poem, best designated by its first line, "Un samedi par nuit," is a vision. The author sees

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a corpse lying on a bier. The Soul has just come forth and appears in the likeness of a naked child. It addresses the Body in a long and eloquent speech, accusing it of all manner of evil and taunting it with its wretched plight. Then the shroud stirs, the Body raises its head, and the Soul is compelled to listen to a counter-accusation, crushing in its vehemence and impossible to refute. "It is thou, O Soul, that shouldst bear the blame. Every sin that I committed was planned by thee. Both of us are culpable, but thy fault is the greater, for I was forced to obey thy promptings. I was the beast of burden; it was thou that didst direct me. Would to God that I had been created without a soul,—a clod of earth, a stone, a beast, a worm of the dust!" Yet the Body refuses to rail at its former companion. "We were friends in the old days, and because of our friendship we are lost forever." When the Body has ceased speaking, it falls back upon the bier. The Soul makes no reply. It breaks forth in a passionate appeal—almost a reproach—to God: "Why dost thou create beings who

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cannot apply themselves to good? Canst thou win glory from the damned?" Then a demon appears. He mocks the Soul and summons a companion fiend. The Soul is like a lamb among wolves. Its shrieks awake the sleeper, and the vision ends.

In execution the French poem cannot compare in dignity and finish with its Anglo-Saxon forerunner, but in plan it marks a distinct advance, in that the Body does not remain dumb under the reproaches of the Soul, but retorts them powerfully, having, one must confess, the best of the argument. Still, the plan is very simple. There is no dialogue, properly so called, but rather two long speeches followed by a moving — an almost terrific — appeal or protest to God. The whole, written as it is in the vernacular, and in a simple style and artless metre, is manifestly intended for the unlearned.

Closely related to "*Un samedi par nuit*," but not derived from it, is a Latin poem in stanzas, dating from the latter half of the twelfth century and written perhaps in England. It is known as the *Vision of Philibert*, — a convenient

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designation, though the introductory stanza which so describes it is not found in all manuscripts and may well be a later addition. The Vision is a much more highly finished production than the French poem, and was, of course, composed for a cultivated audience, as, indeed, the scholastic subtlety which marks the argument would be enough to prove. But that is not all. It is, unlike "*Un samedi par nuit*," a genuine dialogue. Both the Soul and the Body speak several times, and their dispute is a real discussion of their comparative responsibility for the sins which the man has committed. The points raised are in general those which find expression in the French poem, but the argument is closer and is conducted with a keener dramatic sense.

The Vision of Philibert met with the popularity which it deserved, and translations or adaptations occur in many languages. Among these, our English Debate of the Body and the Soul, which was written in the second half of the thirteenth century, is superior to all the rest. The Debate is by no means a mere translation of the Latin Vision. It handles the material with great

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freedom and far surpasses its original. Indeed, it is incomparably the best embodiment of the theme that can be found in any literature. The unknown author was a man of genius, working on a subject which was thoroughly congenial to the temper of his mind. He had both imagination and a sense of form. His style and his metre are alike admirable. The somewhat scholastic argumentation of the *Vision of Philibert* gives place under his hands to dialogue of uncommon impressiveness and much dramatic power. Even the grotesque horror of the conclusion, foreign as it is to our modern habits of thought, only heightens the feeling of pity and fear which the desperate recriminations of the Soul and the Body produce. It is impossible to read the poem without high and sustained emotion.

We cannot discuss the minor versions of the *Debate of the Body and the Soul*, a mere enumeration of which would take much space. They are of every possible kind, and some of them are as late as the eighteenth, and even the nineteenth, century. A single one may be

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specified, however, both because it is curious and because it has escaped the notice of most scholars who have occupied themselves with this subject. This is a broadside ballad of the seventeenth century, known as St. Bernard's Vision. The opening stanzas will suffice to show its character :

As I lay slumbring in my bed one night,
A fearefull vision did me sore affright :
Me thought I saw a Soule departed late,
By it the Body in a poore estate.

Wailing with sighes, the Soule aloud did cry,
Upon the Body in the coffin by ;
And thus the Soule to it did make her moane,
With grievous sobs and many a bitter groane.

Professor Child's translation of the Debate aims to reproduce the thirteenth-century English poem as closely as possible. It was privately printed, for distribution among friends, in 1888, and is now reissued with the sanction of his family. In order that the translator's method may be fully understood, the brief note which he prefixed to his version is likewise reprinted.

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Francis James Child was born in Boston in 1825 and died in Cambridge in 1896. He was appointed to a tutorship in Harvard College in 1846. From 1851 to 1876 he was Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, and from 1876 until his death he was Professor of English. His wide and accurate acquaintance with the literature of many countries and of many periods was the wonder of all who knew him, and his published works ensure him a place among the greatest scholars of modern times. His profound knowledge of mediæval literature was not more remarkable than the warmth of his heart and his deep and ready sympathy with whatever was sound and amiable in human nature.

G. L. KITTREDGE.

OF The Debate of the Body and the Soul, often called The Vision of Philibert, there are versions, widely differing, in many languages. Far the most impressive and the most poetical of those known to me is this English copy (one of several), first printed in Wright's Latin Poems of Walter Mapes, from a manuscript of about 1300. The seventh stanza, which partially supplies a defect, has been adopted from other texts, and also a few readings. Perhaps no poem of the Middle Ages more requires, or would better reward, a thorough editing.

While attempting to make this piece intelligible to a modern reader, I have preferred to keep a few obsolete words in the rhymes rather than resort to a feeble paraphrase. Some of the less familiar of such words are *wood*, furious, *daft*, foolish, *skill*, discernment, *grith*, security, *lith*, joint, *rown*, whisper, *meyné*, retinue, *ernd*, errand, and *lack*, fault. Now and then it has been convenient to use an antiquated grammatical form; but I think that neither old words nor old forms will be found troublesome. Though the rhyme is generally full and rich in the original, assonances occur quite as often as here.

F. J. CHILD.

THE DEBATE OF THE
BODY AND THE SOUL

THE DEBATE
OF THE
BODY AND THE SOUL

AS I lay in a winter's night,
In heavy drowse, before the day,
Forsooth I saw a right strange sight—
A body on a bier that lay,
Which once had been a haughty knight,
And God cared little to obey;
Lost he had his lifès light,
The soul was out, and should away.

THE DEBATE OF THE

When the soul was forced to go,
It turned, and by the bier it stood,
Surveyed the body it came fro,
So sadly, with affrighted mood.

THE SOUL
SPEAKS

It said, “Ah wellaway and wo!
Wo worth thy flesh and foulë blood!
Wretched body, why liest thou so,
That whilom wast so wild and wood?

“Thou that wontest erst to ride
High on horseback, all uncowed,
So gorgeous, famëd far and wide,
As a lion fierce and proud,
Where is now thy mickle pride,
And thy voice that was so loud?
Why liest thou stript, with none beside,
Sticht up in that sorry shroud?

BODY AND THE SOUL

“ Where be thy castle and thy tower,
Thy chambers, and thy lofty hall,
Painted with many a goodly flower?
Thy robes rich and gay withal?
Thy soft quilt and thy coverture,
Thy cloth of sendal and of pall?
Wretch, to-morrow shall thy bower
Be but cold and dark and small.

“ Where is all thy proud array,
Thy sumpters, with the stately bed,
Thy steeds and palfreys for relay,
And the horse-grooms that them led?
Thy shrilly shrieking falcons grey,
And thy sleuth-hounds fairly fed?
Scant are thy goods, methinks, to-day,
And all thy friendes from thee fled.

THE DEBATE OF THE

“ Where be the cooks so nimble, tell,
That should make ready thy rich meat,
With spices many, sweet to smell,
That never thou enough couldst eat,
To make that foulë flesh to swell,
Which worms appointed were to fret?
And all that thou the pangs of hell
By gluttony for me mightst get ! ”

When the soul, with tristful cheer,
Had y-made this mournful moan,
That body that lay on the bier,
A ghastly thing there, all alone,
Its head upon its neck did rear,
And said, as with a sickly groan,
“ Soul, is it thou, my mate whilere,
That speakst such words, now thou art
gone ?

THE BODY
SPEAKS

BODY AND THE SOUL

“After his image God thee shapt,
And gave thee bothë wit and skill;
To thy direction was I laft,
To guide according to thy will.
Nor learned I ever witchëcraft,
Nor wist I what was good or ill,
No more than beastës dumb and daft,
But as the way thou pointedst still.

“Ordained to serve thee, morn and night,
Do thy pleasure and obey,
Since the first hour thou sawst the light
I was committed to thy sway.
Thou, that of wrong deed and of right
Couldst judge, methinks it in thee lay
Of my short wit to have foresight:
By thine own fault thou’rt lost for aye.”

THE DEBATE OF THE

THE SOUL
SPEAKS

The soul it said, “ Body, be still !

Who hath taught thee all this wit,
The crabbed words thou hast at will,

That liest there swollen as a butt ?

Weenest thou, wretch, although thou fill

With thy foulë flesh a pit,

Of all the deeds thou diddest ill,

That thou so lightly shalt go quit ?

“ Weenest thou now to get thee grith,

Where thou liest rotting in the clay ?

Though thou be rotten, fell and pith,

And blowen with the wind away,

Yet shalt thou come, with limb and lith,

Back to me on doomës-day,

And come to court, and I thee with,

There to take our hardë pay.

BODY AND THE SOUL

“ The rule to me did God commit,
But when ill thoughts came in thy head,
In thy teeth thou tookst the bit,
And diddest all that I forbade.
On sin and shame thy lust was set,
On every vileness and misdeed;
I would withstand thee oft, but yet
Thou followedst ever thine own reed.

“ When to tame thee and to teach
What was bad and good, I meant,
Of Crist nor kirk thou’dst hear no speech,
On wild and giddy pleasures bent.
Forever might I pray and preach;
To make thy frivolous mind consent
To own God was beyond my reach;
Thou didst thy wilful heart’s intent.

THE DEBATE OF THE

“I bade thee think on soulës need,
Matins, mass and even-song;
Such idle calls thou couldst not heed,
To youth far other thoughts belong.
To wood and water wouldst thou speed,
Or to court, to do men wrong;
Save for vain-glory or for meed,
Small good was found thy deeds
among.

“Now may the wildë bestës ren,
And liën under lind and leaf,
And fowlës fly by field and fen,
Since thy false heart has come to cleave.
Thine eyes are blind, and cannot ken,
Thy mouth is dumb, thine ear is deaf;
Thou liest there with a loathly grin,
And from thee cometh a wicked whiff.

BODY AND THE SOUL

“ There is no lady, bright of blee,
That wonted high thy love to rate,
That now would spend a night by thee
For any gift that she might get.
Thou art unseemly for to see,
Uncomely for to kissen sweet;
Thou hast not friend that would not flee
Shouldst thou come staggering through
the street.”

The body groaned, and gan to say,
“ Soul, thou art in the wrong, iwiss,
All the blame on me to lay
That thou hast lost thy mickle bliss.
Where was I, by wood or way,
Where sat, stood, or did aught amiss,
But thine eye was on me aye?
Well thou knowst that sooth it is.

THE BODY
SPEAKS

THE DEBATE OF THE

“ Whither went I, up or down,
And did not bear thee on my back?
Under thy rein, from town to town,
Still thou hadst me for thy hack.
But thou it in my ear didst rown,
Never thing I did or spak;
This proof assoils me, thou must own,
Now I lie here so blue and black.

“ As long as we companions were,
I had all that I could need;
I could speak and see and hear,
Could walk and ride, and drink and
eat.
Vilely changëd is my cheer
Since the time thou didst me quit;
Deaf and dumb I lie on bier,
And may not stirren hands nor feet.

BODY AND THE SOUL

“ I should have been but as the sheep,
Or like the oxen or the swine,
That eat and drink, and lie and sleep,
Are slain, and after know no pain;
Nor money cared to win or keep,
Nor knew the odds of well or wine,
Nor now be bound to hellë deep,
But for those cursed wits of thine.”

The soul it said, “ Of that no doubt,
Me, body, 't was thy lot to bear;
For needs thou didst, I was without
Both hand and foot, thou wast aware.
Save as thou tookst me in and out,
I might not go nor here nor there;
Therefore my part it was to lout,
As he doth that no other dare.

THE SOUL
SPEAKS

THE DEBATE OF THE

“ Of a woman born and bred,
Body, were we bothë two;
Together fostered fair and fed
Till thou couldest speak and go.
Softly thee, for love, I led,
Nor durst I ever cause thee wo;
To lose thee was my sorest dread;
No other should I get, I knew.

“ I saw thee fair in flesh and blood,
And all my love on thee I cast,
That thou shouldst thrive methought was
good,
That thou shouldst have thine ease and
rest.

This made thee of unruly mood,
And thy works were all unblest;
To fight against thee was no boot
For me that housed within thy breast.

BODY AND THE SOUL

“ Gluttony and lechery,
Pride and sinful coveytise,
Hatred and malignity
To God in heaven and all of his,
In wicked lustës for to lie,
Waste and squander — none of these
But I dearly shall aby;
Sorely it me terrifies.

“ Warnings timely we two had
Of the judgment we should have;
Little heed thou gavest that,
Though all thy kin went to their grave.
Thou didst all that the world thee bade,
All that the likerous flesh would crave;
And I permitted — I was mad —
Thee to be master, I thy slave ! ”

THE DEBATE OF THE

THE BODY “ What, thinkst thou, soul, ’twill help
SPEAKS thee aught,
To clear thyself, whate’er befall,
Thou, that wast so nobly wrought,
To say I made of thee my thrall?
In all my days I ne’er did naught,
Never plundered, never stole,
But first from thee there came the thought;
Aby it that aby it shall!

“ How wist I what was wrong or right,
What to take or what to leave,
But as the act thou didst incite,
Whom nature all the wisdom gave?
In vice accustomed to delight,
Whene’er some sin thou didst conceive,
Then would I strive with all my might
Once more my wonted way to have.

BODY AND THE SOUL

“ Hadst thou inured me, lief or loath,
To suffer hunger, thirst and cold,
Chastised and schooled to good and truth,
In infamy when I was bold,
What I had taken up in youth
I should have kept when I was old;
Thou letst me, raking north and south,
Do all my pleasure, uncontrolled.

“ To sin, thou knewst, was all my mind,
For with our race it is but so;
To this world all our thoughts inclined,
And to the fiend that is our foe.
It was for thee to beat and bind,
When I misdid, and do me woe;
But when the blind man leads the blind,
In ditch they fallen, bothë two.”

THE DEBATE OF THE

THE SOUL
SPEAKS

Then began the soul to greet,
And said, “Ah, body, to my cost,
I lovèd thee, and to my cheat,
For all my love on thee was lost.
Thou love for me didst counterfeit,
Ever thy dupe I was, thou knowst;
I did all that to thee was sweet,
And thou my traitor ever wast.

“Who can his credulous lord betray,
Or his fond master undermine,
So easily as the servant may
To whom all charge he doth resign?
Thine ease and comfort to purvey,
Since manhood’s growth and strength
were thine,
I have striven, as in me lay, —
Thou to bring me to hellë-pine.

BODY AND THE SOUL

“ The fiend of hell, that hath envie
To mankind, and hath ever had,
He was within us as a spie,
To do some good when I thee bade.
The world he took in companie,
That many a soul had erst betrayed;
They two knew well of thy follie,
And made thee, wretched thing, quite
mad.

“ When I bade thee shrift to make,
Leave thy sin and almës do,
Do thy penance, fast and wake,
The fiend, he said, ‘Thou shalt not so—
Thus young thy riot to forsake,
To liven long in pain and woe;
I reed thee that thou merry make,
And think to live years many mo.’

THE DEBATE OF THE

“ When I bade thee leave thy pride,
Thy many meats, thy rich array,
The falsë World, that stood beside,
Bade thee be ever fine and gay —
To trick thyself in robës wide,
No beggar’s clout, or palmer’s gray,
High on a palfrey for to ride,
Attended with a great meyné.

“ When I bade thee early rise,
Warily thy soul to keep,
Thou saidst thou mightest in no wise
Forego the pleasant morning sleep.
When ye were sitting in assise,
Ye traitors three, well might I weep;
Ye led me after your device,
As the bellwether doth his sheep.

BODY AND THE SOUL

“When ye three traitors, to my bale
Combining, were against me sworn,
Thenceforth ye made an idle tale
Of all that I had said beforne.
Ye led me round by down and dale,
As an ox is led by the horn,
Till he cometh thither, without fail,
Where his throtte shall be shorn.

“For love, thy will I did in all,
And to mine own perdition drew,
Following thy lead, that wast my thrall,
Though false and frivolous through
and through.
Thou wouldst do and I conceal,
That it was wrong, full well we knew;
Now must we take what shall befall,
Torment, shame and sorrow enow.

THE DEBATE OF THE

“Though all the men beneath the moon
To speak our doom were set in see,
The shames that shullen us be done,
They could not half imagined be.
No wit may serve these shames to shun,
There helps us now nor prayer nor
plea;
The hellë-hounds are coming soon,
There is nowhither I may flee.”

When the body saw the ghost
All this dole and sorrow make,
It said, “Too long my life did last,
Which I have lived for sinnës sake!
O that my heart anon had brost
When I was from my mother take!
Then in a pit I had been cast,
Or lain and rotted in a lake.

THE BODY
SPEAKS

BODY AND THE SOUL

“Then had I never known or learned
What was bad or what was good,
For wicked thing had never yearned,
Nor the torment suffer should
Where no saint may take our ernd
To him that bought us with his blood—
In fire of hellë to be burned,
Though Crist had died upon the rood.”

“Nay, body, now it is too late
For to pray and for to preach,
Now the wain is at the gate,
And thy tongue has lost its speech.
One jot of all our pangs to bate
In all this world there is no leech;
We two together go our gate,
So far God’s hard avengements reach.

THE SOUL
SPEAKS

THE DEBATE OF THE

“ But haddest thou, a little ere
Our sinful life was wholly spent,
While thou layst sick, and death was
near,
Listed to shrive thee and repent,
The devil shamed, and dropped a tear,
With promise of amendement
Then we had need to have no fear
But God his blessing would have sent.

“ Though all the men that are alive
Were priestës, masses for to sing,
Though all the maidens, every wife
And widow, should their handës wring,
Yea, multiply by timës five
All creatures in the world living,
Since we no more have time to shrive,
To bliss they never could us bring.

BODY AND THE SOUL

“Body, I may no longer dwell
Nor stand here for to speak with thee;
Hellë-houndës I hear yell,
And fiendës mo than man can see,
That come to fetchen me to hell;
I may nowhither from them flee;
And thou shalt come, with flesh and fell,
On doomës-day to be with me.”

The soul these words had scarcely spoke,
That wist not whither it should go,
When with a bound right in there broke
A thousand devils, and yet mo.
Their sharpë claws in it they stoke,
Exulting, with a loud halloo,
And piteously, with many a mock,
They tugged and toused it to and fro.

THE DEBATE OF THE

For they were rough and fierce and
tailed,

With broad bulges on their back,
Sharp their clawës, longë nailed,

There was no limb withoutë lack.
On every side it was assailed

By many a devil, foul and black;
Crying mercy naught availed

When God his hard revenge would
take.

Some the jaws wide open wrast

And pourëd in the lead all hot,
Bade him thereof to drinken fast,

And skink to all his friends about.
A devil came there attë last

That was the master, well I wot,
A glowing colter in him thrust,

And through the heart the iron smot.

BODY AND THE SOUL

White-hot sword-blades some did set
To back and breast and either side;
In his heart the pointës met,
And made great gaping woundës
wide;—

A pretty sight, not to forget,
They said, that heart so full of pride,
But they had promised morë yet,
And more should presently betide.

Seemly weeds they must not spare,
In such he ever would be drest;
A devil's mail-coat for to wear,
All burning, was upon him cast,
With red-hot hasps, to fasten fair,
That sat right close to back and breast;
Anon thereto a helmet rare,
And eek a charger of the best.

THE DEBATE OF THE

As a colt for him to ride
A cursed devil forth they brought,
Horribly grinning, yawning wide,
And flame all flaring from his throat;
With a saddle at mid-side
Full of sharpë pikës shot,
Like a heckle to bestride,
And all over blazing-hot.

On that saddle he was slung,
As if equipped for tournament;
A hundred devils at him flung,
Hither, thither, was he hent;
With hotë sperës stabbed and stung,
With sharpë hookës rived and rent,
At every dint the sparkles sprung,
As from a blazing fire-brand sent.

BODY AND THE SOUL

When the course was rid and run,
 Upon the saddle ill to praise,
To be their fox they cast him down,
 For he had loved the hunt and chase.
They set the pack of hell-hounds on,
 To tear him in the hell-ward race;
All the road that they had gone
 Was by a track of blood to trace.

They call to him his horn to blow,
 To tarre on Bauston and Beví,
The brachs that used his voice to know,
 For straightway they should sound the
 prise.
A hundred devils in a row
 Haul him with ropes to an abyss,
A hateful hole that gapes alow —
 The pit of hell, I wot, it is.

THE DEBATE OF THE

Arrived at that ill mansiön,

The fiends halloed with such a yell
The earth it opened up anon;

Smoke and smother forth did well;
Of the pitch and the brimstone

For five mile ye might have the smell;
Lord, that man is woe-begone

That scents far off that loathly dell!

When the soul saw in verity

Where it must go, it raised loud cries:

THE SOUL “ On me, thy work, have thou mercy,
SPEAKS

Jesu, that sittest in the skies!

Madest thou not also even me

With thine own hand, that art so wise,
As well as those that are with thee

In the joy of Paradise?

BODY AND THE SOUL

“ Thou, that seest all beforne,
All ends from the beginning knowst,
Why madest thou me for wrath and scorn,
And others of thy bliss to boast ?
The souls foredoomed to be forlorn,
Wretches created to be lost,
Why wouldst thou suffer them to be born,
And give the foul fiend such a host ?”

Out upon him the fiends gan crie,
“ Caitiff, it helpeth thee no more
To call on Jesu and Marie,
Or Cristës mercy to implore.
Thou didst forsake such company,
And long hast served us, and therefor
Thou shalt have guerdon faithfully
Such as thy likes have had of yore.”

THE DEVILS
SPEAK

THE DEBATE OF THE

The foul fiends, of their business fain,
They caught it up by head and feet,
And pitcht it down with might and main,
Down into the devil's pit,
Where light of sun shall ne'er be seen;
Themselves they sank along with it;
Eftsones the earth closed up again,
Anon the dungeon-door was shut!

When it was gone, that foulë brood,
To hellë pit, ere it were day,
On every hair a drop there stood
For fright and fear, there as I lay.
To Jesu Crist, in humble mood,
Devoutly I called, expecting aye
That presently the fiendës should
Come to fetchen me away.

BODY AND THE SOUL

Crist, that my sins did expiate,
His grace and mercy I adore,
That kept me, sinner, from the hate
Of many a devil that fearful hour.
Them that be sinful I entreat
To shrive them, and repentë sore;
Never sin was done so great
That Cristës mercy is not more.

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